

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

A Path to Leadership for a New DVM: The Story of Dr. Eva Evans

Editor's Note: *The following story describes the path of a recent veterinary graduate to develop her leadership potential in organized veterinary medicine. The author, Dr. Eva Evans, is the newest member of the AVMA Political Action Committee (PAC).¹Dr. Evans also serves on the Scholarship and Awards Committee of the American Veterinary Medical Foundation where she evaluates scholarship applications from veterinary students. Dr. Evans provides an effective roadmap for how a veterinarian can position herself to have an impact early in her career, and also learn leadership skills that will allow her to develop increasing levels of responsibility to have an impact on the future of the profession.*

Dr. Evans grew up on an equine farm on the outskirts of Nashville, Tennessee. Since graduating from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine in 2012, she has been part of the team of the Centennial Hills Animal Hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada.²An avid runner who has completed several half marathons, Dr. Evans also enjoys gardening, reading and playing with her three Boston Terriers. My sincere thanks go to Dr. Karen Bradley, AVMA House of Delegates (Vermont) and former Chair of the House Advisory Committee, for inviting Dr. Evans to write her story.³

-- Donald F. Smith

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By Dr. Eva Evans
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Becoming a Leader of the PAC

As a new or recent female graduate from veterinary school, we all know the strength of women in our career field. We grow up seeing far more women than men attend veterinary school, and our classes are full to the brim with females. After graduation, the theme continues as many of our new colleagues are women as well. The disparity between genders makes an appearance at the upper levels of leadership roles. As young female veterinarians who are eager to be involved with local, state and national organizations, we often find ourselves split between the feelings of frustration and helplessness of not knowing where to start. The idea of joining a committee or board seems daunting. The good news is that there are so many veterinarians,

men and women, young and old, who are willing to help us find our path to leadership. All that stands in your way is your desire to pursue it.



Eva Evans, DVM, Member AVMAPAC, AVMF⁵
Photo provided by Dr. Evans, 2013

As a newly elected member to the AVMA PAC board, I started my journey about a year ago. I was blessed and fortunate to meet several amazing colleagues along the way; bosses, friends and mentors all helped guide me to the destination. The key to getting started is to express interest, and talk to anyone and everyone about what you want to do. You never know who you'll meet, and those contacts can serve as advisors as well as advocates for you. These people will become lifelong friends, and one day you may have the opportunity to return the favor.

Don't be afraid to put yourself out there. Don't be afraid to run for an elected position. Don't ever be afraid to let people know your strengths and what you can bring to the table. Sometimes our lack of traditional experience can be used as a strength. Your youthful energy, your tech-savvy-generation skills, your free time, and even your gender can become strengths when it comes to leadership.

There are many easy ways to join committees and task forces within your local and state VMAs, AVMF, AVMA, etc. Often those "shoe-in" positions need only your willingness to participate, and they can be a great confidence builder for future leadership roles. It's been shown that women assess risk differently from men. We tend to make our decisions based on our odds of attaining the desired outcome. Don't let the odds of not being elected sway you away from running for a position. The worst thing that can happen is you don't get that particular position, but now many new people know your name and your willingness to make a difference. That in itself is an amazing way to be recognized as a leader. Having leaders know your name and your

story will pay dividends in the long run.

Use your contacts, attend conventions, dress to the level at which you want to succeed. Promote yourself. You are your biggest advocate in life. Don't be afraid to walk up to someone in an upper-level leadership role and introduce yourself. Practice a firm handshake, give them a warm smile and let them know what you want out of life. Lean on others when you need guidance, and in turn be a beacon for someone else. Be prepared for the chance of failure, but even more importantly, be prepared for the chance of success.

¹ [American Veterinary Medical Association Political Action Committee \(AVMAPAC\)](#). AVMA Website.

² [Centennial Hills Animal Hospital](#), Las Vegas, Nevada.

³ Bradley, Karen DVM, co-owner, [Onion River Animal Hospital](#), Middlesex, Vermont.

⁴ [Women's Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative \(WVLDI\)](#). Website.

⁵ [American Veterinary Medical Foundation \(AVMF\)](#). Website.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Eva Evans grew up on an equine farm on the outskirts of Nashville, Tennessee. Since graduating from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine in 2012, she has been part of the team of the Centennial Hills Animal Hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada. An avid runner who has completed several half marathons, Dr. Evans also enjoys gardening, reading and playing with her three Boston Terriers.